COPY TOP SECRET ANNEX 6 116(R)

MESSAGE FOR THE SECRETARY FROM MR. BEVIN
RECEIVED THROUGH THE BRITISH EMBASSY
AT WASHINGTON, AUGUST 22, 1947

I have given the most careful consideration to your message delivered to me by Mr. Douglas suggesting that the withdrawal of our troops from Greece should not take place until after the Greek case has been disposed of at the Security Council. I find it difficult to foresee when this will take place and in any case you are now proposing that the case should be taken to the Assembly. You will remember that when we discussed the question of the British troops and Military Mission in Greece during the Moscow Conference I made it clear to you that it would be impossible for us to keep the troops in Greece beyond the autumn of this year, and you told me on March 18 that the retention of our Military Mission would in no way prejudice the withdrawal of the remainder of our troops. I am suggesting that our Chiefs of Staff should discuss the matter with your Chiefs of Staff, but my colleagues and I, having given the matter most careful and anxious thought, have decided that on every ground it is essential that the withdrawal of our troops must be completed during the autumn. I shall be grateful if you will make this clear to your Chiefs of Staff as the basis of detailed discussion with our Chiefs of Staff.

2. In your personal message delivered to me by Mr. Douglas on the 2nd August you said that you were concerned at our decision to implement our intention to withdraw our troops from Greece in the light of recent developments affecting that country. The messages that I have had from the Greek Government and from our Embassy in Athens suggest that the most dangerous factor in the situation is the increasing strain upon the Greek armed forces, and the Greek Government have begged us to represent to your Government most earnestly the importance of getting the immediate agreement of your Government to certain increases in the effective strength of the Greek Army which our military authorities consider justified and desirable to enable the Greek armed forces to continue to conduct effective operations against the bandits. I am sure that what is most necessary to stabilise the situation in Greece is that these increases should be sanctioned at once and got underway as quickly as possible. This will more than set off the withdrawal of our troops provided it is done immediately. I am suggesting that our Chiefs of Staff should discuss this too with your Chiefs of Staff and I hope that your Government will/

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEWED BY WOLF JR DATE 5/25/82
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☒ RELEASABLE☒
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

will feel able to agree immediately to the proposed increases.

3. We are desirous that our troops in Italy should be out by the end of the year in order that the Government may fulfil its public pledge to reduce the numbers of British troops by 133,000 by the 31st December. As you know, we are being strongly pressed from all quarters to increase this figure of reductions. There can be no possible question, therefore, of prolonging the stay of our troops in Italy beyond the end of the year. But within this limit our Chiefs of Staff will do their utmost to meet the views of your Chiefs of Staff.